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ABSTRACT

The Youth Work Skills Program provided basic skills remediation, support services, and subsidized or unsubsidized work placement to out-of-school, economically disadvantaged youth aged 16-21 with demonstrated reading scores at or below the fifth-grade level. The program had three phases: basic education/vocational and career exploration, basic education/work experience, and placement with continued supportive services. Of 455 participants, 82 percent were Black, 11 percent Hispanic, and 7 percent White. Seventy-five percent stated the program helped them decide on a career plan. Participants showed a grade gain of 1.5 for reading and a grade gain of 1.2 for math. Work Skills participants achieved statistically significant pre-post gains on the World of Work tests. Ninety-eight percent of participants reported they planned either to continue working, pursue additional training, or return to school; 99 percent would recommend the program to friends. Ninety-eight percent of employers indicated they planned to continue their program participation. Nearly 70 percent of participants experienced a positive activity, such as returning to school, getting a job, or enrolling in other training. (An appendix lists program sites and offers highlights of the elements of curriculum innovation found in each program.) (YLB)

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Work Skills Program

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YOUTH WORK SKILLS PROGRAM

ANNUAL REPORT
1991

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PROLOGUE

In a recent report, Robert Lerman[1] stated that, "today's young people face serious challenges as they navigate their way through formal education, gain work experience, develop careers and form families. Although they are equipped with more years of schooling than earlier cohorts, young men and women will have to utilize more knowledge to obtain a well-paying job." John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene[2] added, "the information economy is providing an extraordinary number of well-paying, challenging jobs. However, you must possess the required skill to do those jobs."

In keeping with the observations cited above some economists note that the economy has been increasing its demand for high-skill workers faster than the schools and social system have been creating them. The negative side of this development is increasing inequality between the college educated, high school educated, and the under-educated school dropout. The wage and employment gap between these groups is widening even more than before to the advantage of the college educated.

If the U.S. is to remain competitive in the global economy, we must improve the education and training of all our youth, or we will lose the high-skill jobs referred to in the paragraph above. Therefore, if schools, employment and training programs and families can keep pace to improve the skills of young workers, the jobs will be there. It is with this spirit that the Work Skills Program faces the challenge of the 90s.

[1] Robert J. Lerman, *Youth In the 1990s, Recent Trends and Expected Patterns: Issue Paper No. 9*, The American University, July 1991.

[2] John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, *Megatrends 2000*, William Morrow and Company, 1990.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Youth Work Skills Program, a legislative initiative originally funded in 1986-87, was specifically created to address the pool of young people with limited basic skills. Today, this program is targeted toward out-of-school, economically disadvantaged youth aged 16-21 with demonstrated reading scores at or below the fifth grade level.

Youth Work Skills provides basic skills remediation, support services, and subsidized or unsubsidized work placement to program participants.

The findings noted in this report indicate that the Youth Work Skills Program was successful in enhancing the educational achievement, work attitudes, and employability of youth who had been unsuccessful in the traditional school setting.

- A total of 455 participants were enrolled in the program in comparison with a planned enrollment of 418.
- Black participants accounted for 82 percent of the total enrollment, followed by Hispanics at 11 percent and Whites at seven percent.
- Seventy-five percent of the surveyed participants stated that the program helped them to decide on a career plan.
- Participants showed a grade gain of 1.5 for reading and a grade gain of 1.2 for math.
- As a result of program participation, Work Skills participants achieved statistically significant pre-post gains on the World of Work tests. These standardized tests assess a multitude of job seeking and job holding skills.
- Ninety-eight percent of the participants reported that they plan either to continue working, pursue additional training or return to school.
- Ninety-nine percent of the participants responded "yes" to the question, "Would you recommend this program to your friends?"
- Ninety-eight percent of the employers surveyed in the Work Skills Program indicated that they plan to continue their program participation.
- Nearly 70 percent of the Work Skills participants experienced a positive activity such as returning to school, getting a job, completing GED or enrolling in other training.

THE WORK SKILLS PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Originally funded in 1986-87 by a legislative appropriation of $2 million, the Work Skills Program remains an initiative directed toward out-of-school, economically disadvantaged youth ages 16-21 with demonstrated reading scores at or below the fifth grade level. The program is managed by the Department of Labor (DOL) and delivered by community-based organizations. It is designed to instill positive self-image and work values, to improve basic reading and mathematical skills necessary for performance in the work place, and to utilize both classroom and work site training to motivate "at risk" youth to assume responsibility for achieving the goal of economic self-sufficiency.

PROGRAM MODEL

Pivotal to work skills effectiveness and overall success is its highly innovative curriculum which is delivered in three sequential phases. Key elements of each phase and program innovations are discussed below.

Phase I - Basic Education/Vocational and Career Exploration

Time Frame: Four to 10 weeks per participant

During this phase, participants undergo pre-testing for diagnostic and evaluation purposes. Following program orientation, participants along with staff develop an individualized program progress plan.

Curriculum activity during this phase consists of basic educational skills, life skills, and pre-employment skills training. Ongoing participant support services are initiated during this phase. Program sites provide individual and group counseling. Participant support in the areas of child care, housing, medical and legal assistance is provided through external resource development. During this phase participants receive a stipend of $2.00 per hour for a maximum of 30 hours of weekly classroom participation.

Phase II - Basic Education/Work Experience

Time Frame: Six to eight months per participant

Having successfully completed Phase I, the program participant engages in a work experience, if possible, reflective of his or her career interest for as many as three days each week, and is paid no less than the minimum wage.

While engaged at a work site the participant continues the basic education skills portion of the program. In conjunction with their work, participants continue to receive supportive services and a $2.00 per hour stipend for educational contact time.

To ensure the realization of participant objectives, participants and staff jointly continue to review, assess and adapt participant program plans. Specific staff and participant activities include:

a. assessment of participant's progress.

b. renegotiation of progress plan and work/education.

c. counseling and advocacy.

d. basic educational skills and competencies.

e. work experience placement.

f. work site monitoring, counseling, and intervention when needed.

g. job readiness activities in preparation for employment.

h. development of other Phase II transition options, i.e., return to high school, or enrollment in a vocational education, other skills training or GED program.

i. post-tests for evaluation and long-term individual planning purposes.

Phase III - Placement with Continued Supportive Services

Time Frame: Two months

This phase consists of supportive transition to independent maintenance of the educational experience or job into which the participant has progressed. Also, the development of long-term goals and goal attainment may continue during this period.

Through continued counseling, support and job search/job club activities, participants are encouraged to do long-term post program planning. Concomitantly, staff provide counseling and job readiness training services to those participants in transition to education or training experiences. Staff linkages with educational institutions and employers provide transition continuity.

CURRICULUM INNOVATION

The Youth Work Skills Program, model, by design, fosters curriculum innovation -- see Appendix A for highlights of the elements of innovation found in each program.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The evaluation of the Work Skills Program is conducted for the purpose of providing the program operators, program participants, Department of Labor, and the New York State Legislature with objective information on the processes and outcomes of the program. The following question is central to the evaluation task:

Did the program increase participant's marketability in the job market?

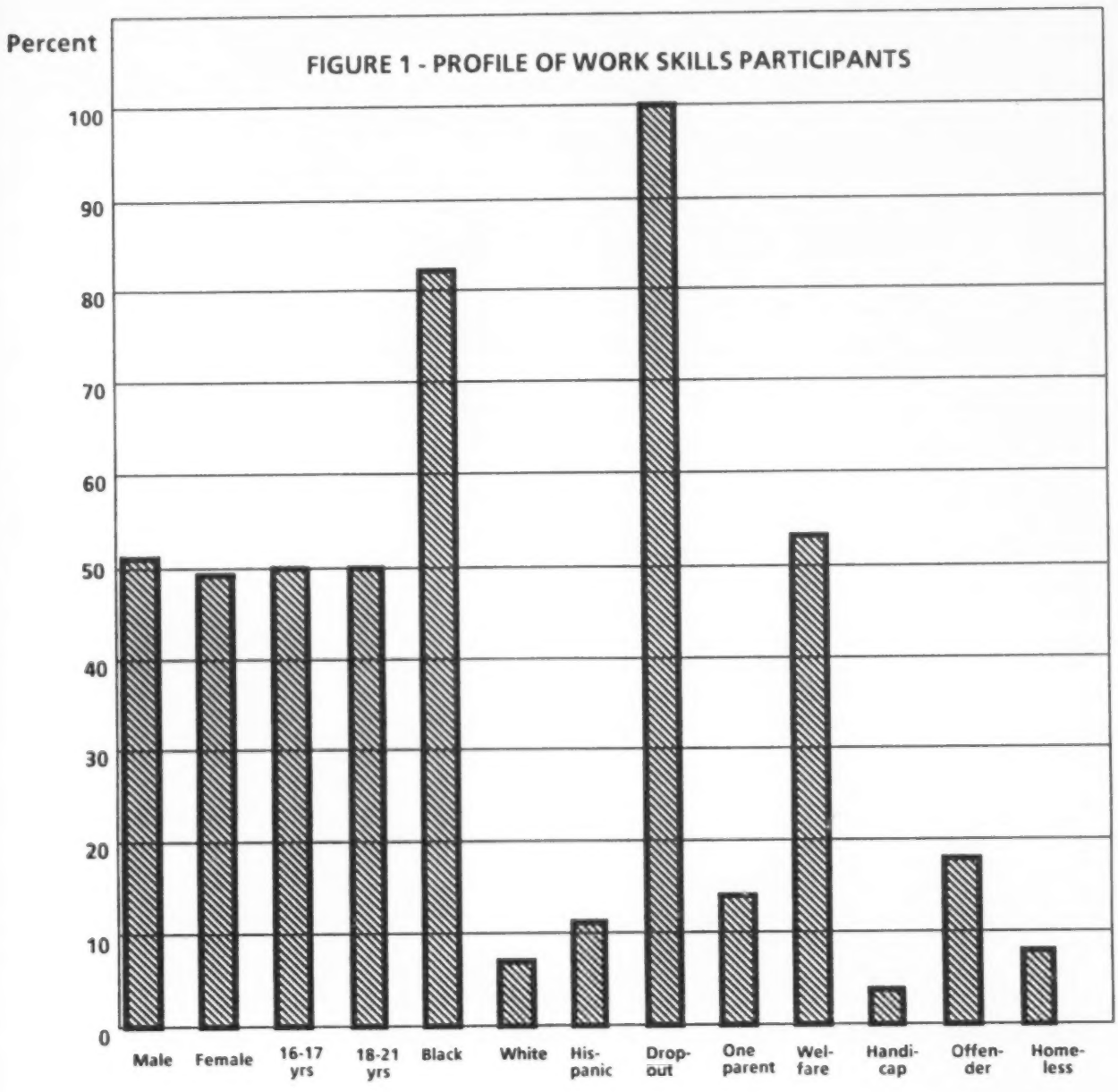
Moreover, answers to this question speak to specific needs and concerns of the various stakeholders mentioned. Specifically, legislators need objective information to determine whether the program should be renewed, expanded or curtailed.

Both DOL and program operators need objective information in order to identify ways to improve the programs intended services and to meet the needs of the program participants.

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF WORK SKILLS PARTICIPANTS

Figure 1 provides a demographic description of the 455 participants in the Work Skills Program. All the participants were dropouts. Fifty-one percent of them were males. Forty-nine percent were females. Half of the participants were 16-17 years of age and half were 18-21 years of age. Other significant demographics include:

- Blacks accounted for 82 percent of those who participated in the program followed by Hispanics and Whites who accounted for 11 percent and seven percent, respectively.
- Fourteen percent of the participants were single parents.
- Fifty-three percent of the participants were receiving welfare assistance at the time of their program participation.
- Four percent of the participants were handicapped.
- Eight percent of the participants were homeless.
- Offenders accounted for 18 percent of those who participated in the program.


Percent
FIGURE 1 - PROFILE OF WORK SKILLS PARTICIPANTS
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Male
Female
16-17 yrs
18-21 yrs
Black
White
His-panic
Drop-out
One parent
Wel-fare
Handi-cap
Offen-der
Home-less

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

Overall, the Work Skills Program met the planned goals for participant enrollment. The comparison of planned and actual enrollments for the 1990-91 program year are displayed in Table 1. A total of 455 participants were served in comparison to a planned enrollment of 418. The number served was nine percent greater than planned. The program was over enrolled to compensate for estimated participant attrition based on program history.

Close inspection of the table shows that individually, eight out of 12 programs surpassed their enrollment goals.

Table 1
Plan vs. Enrollments

Program Name	Planned	Actual	Deviation From Plan
Action for a Better Community, Inc.	44	43	- 2%
Brownsville Community Neighborhood Act. Ctr., Inc.	40	40	0
Clarkson Ctr. For Youth Work Skills Program	46	50	+ 9
Corporation for Youth Energy Corps, Inc.	29	37	+ 28
National Congress of Neighborhood Women	14	16	+ 14
Schenectady Job Training Agency	17	19	+ 12
Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Ctrs., Inc.	59	59	0
St. Augustine's Center, Inc.	25	35	+ 40
Urban League of Rochester	48	48	0
Utica Community Action, Inc.	16	16	0
Youth Resources Development Corp.	33	33	0
Bedford Stuyvesant YMCA	47	59	+ 26
Total	**418**	**455**	**+ 9**

EMPLOYER SURVEY

A work site questionnaire, developed by the Labor Department, enabled employers to provide feedback regarding participant's attitude and behavior on the job site. Specifically, work site supervisors rated participant's attendance, punctuality, work attitudes, and vocational skills. As shown in Table 2, work site supervisors indicated that participants exhibited positive work attitude and behavior throughout their work experience. Seventy-five percent of the participant's attendance at the beginning of the program either was excellent (no absences) or good (fewer than three per month). Participant's attendance toward the end of the work experience remained high. Seventy-two percent of them either had no absences or were absent fewer than three times per month.

With regard to participant's punctuality, 68 percent were either never tardy or tardy fewer than three times per month at the program's start. Towards the end of the work experience, supervisors rated 78 percent of the participants as being either good or excellent with regard to punctuality.

Turning to participant's attitudes toward work and their vocational skills level we note substantial improvement.

- With regard to participants exhibiting a positive work attitude, toward the end of the work experience, 80 percent received a rating of excellent or good for this component.

- At the end of the program supervisors observed significant skill gain. Eighty percent of the participants either showed great improvement or some improvement.

Lastly, in response to the question, would you participate in the program again, all of the employers surveyed said,"yes."

Table 2
Employer Survey

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1.	At the beginning of the program, how was the participant's attendance at the work site?	26.7	48.3	16.7	8.3
2.	At the end of the program, how was the participant's attendance?	26.7	45.0	20.0	8.3
3.	At the beginning of the program, how was the participant's punctuality?	30.0	38.8	23.3	8.3
4.	At the end of the program, how was the participant's punctuality?	28.8	49.2	15.3	6.8
5.	At the end of the program, did you observe any improvement in the participant's work attitudes?	25.9	51.9	13.0	9.3
6.	At the end of the program, did you observe any improvement in the participant's vocational skills?	25.9	53.7	11.1	9.3

WORLD OF WORK

Occupational Knowledge, Survival Skills, and Community Resources, three subtests from the Job Corps World of Work Basic Education Competency Program, were administered to Work Skills participants in order to measure their gains in basic job seeking and job holding skills. Table 3, which presents the results of a sample of participants, indicates significant increases in job seeking and job holding skills. These findings appear to be highly correlated with the willingness of the work site supervisors to participate in the program.

Table 3
Summary of Occupational Knowledge
For Work Skills Participants

Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
15.5	18.3	2.8

Summary of Community Resources
For Work Skills Participants

Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
15.6	19.5	3.9

Summary of Survival Skills
For Work Skills Participants

Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
19.6	23.1	3.5

TEST OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) was the standardized instrument employed in the Work Skills Program. TABE is designed to measure achievement in reading, mathematics, language, and spelling -- subject areas commonly found in adult basic education curricula. The reading and math portion of the TABE (level M), which measures reading at the fifth grade level, was used to assess participant's gain in reading and math.

The major finding from an analysis of pre- and post-test scores was a substantial improvement in reading and math for program participants. As shown in Table 4, the pre-test mean for reading from a sample of participants was 697 and the post-test mean was 729, a gain of 32. Converting the means into grade equivalents showed a grade gain of 1.5 in reading. The pre-test mean for math was 694 and the post-test mean was 726, a gain of 32. Converting the means into grade equivalents, showed a grade increase of 1.2 in math skills.

Table 4
Participants' Gains in Reading and Math

Reading

Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
697	729	32

Grade Equivalent	Grade Equivalent	Gain
4.8	6.3	1.5

Math

Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Gain
694	726	32

Grade Equivalent	Grade Equivalent	Gain
4.5	5.7	1.2

PARTICIPANT SATISFACTION

The role of client satisfaction in program implementation and service delivery is well documented in the literature . As a variable in understanding program related behavior and outcome, client satisfaction is hypothesized to be both a dependent variable and a predictor of client post-program behavior. Thus, the participant's evaluation of the Work Skills Program is important from two standpoints: program design and their post-program job-related behavior.

In responding to a series of questions regarding the kind and quality of program service they received while in the Youth Work Skills Program, participants expressed a high rate of satisfaction with the program. A summary of their responses follows:

Basic Education

Eighty-nine percent of the participants said they were satisfied with the educational component of the program.

Counseling

Eighty-three percent of the participants found the counseling experience to be very helpful.

Career Education

Seventy-eight percent of the participants rated their experience with this program component as positive.

Work Experience

Over 80 percent of the participants perceived their work experience as positive.

Participant Problems

Regarding problems they may have encountered while in the program, 61 percent of the participants reported no problems with any aspect of the program or with factors external to the program (child care and transportation) that may have interfered with their program participation. Of those participants who did report having problems, most involved work experience and transportation.

The work site supervisor, followed by the program instructor, were the individuals most often cited in response to the question, "Who helped you work on this problem(s)?"

Career Plans

Seventy-five percent of the participants indicated that the program helped them to decide on a career plan. Ninety-eight percent of the participants reported that they plan either to continue working, pursue additional training or return to school.

General Satisfaction

Ninety-nine percent of the participants responded "yes" to the question, "Would you recommend this program to your friends?"

PARTICIPANT OUTCOME

The data summarized in Table 5, together with the findings noted in previous sections of this report, demonstrate that the Work Skills Program does what it is designed to do -- increase participant's marketability in the job market.

Key findings for 311 participants completing the Work Skills Program in 1991 were as follows:

- Twenty-seven percent completed GED preparation.
- Eighteen percent obtained a job.
- Fourteen percent enrolled in an additional training program.
- Six percent returned to school.

Table 5
Participant Outcome By Percentage (completers)

Program Name	GED Prep	Obtained Unsubsidized Employment	Obtained Additional Training	Returned To School
Action for a Better Community, Inc.	48%	15%	0%	22%
Brownsville Community Neighborhood Act. Ctr.	20	48	12	8
Clarkson Ctr. For Youth Work Skills Program	24	12	6	0
Corporation for Youth Energy Corps, Inc.	*	*	*	*
National Congress of Neighborhood Women	75	16	0	0
Schenectady Job Training Agency	11	32	11	5
Southeast Bronx Neighborhood Ctrs., Inc.	48	5	29	12
St. Augustine's Center, Inc.	0	25	65	5
Urban League of Rochester	24	38	29	0
Utica Community Action, Inc.	57	43	0	0
Youth Resources Development Corp.	4	23	12	12
Bedford Stuyvesant YMCA	20	7	4	0
Total	**27%**	**18%**	**14%**	**6%**

Some terminees were credited with achieving multiple positive outcomes.
* Data not available.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As previously noted in this report, the Work Skills Program did in fact increase participant's employability. However, in light of the observations that the 90s will require young workers with more knowledge than earlier cohorts, the fundamental question that needs to be addressed by the Work Skills Program is, "Does the increase in participant's employability begin to prepare the Work Skills participants to meet the demands of a 90s job market?"

First, to address this question we need to implement several discrete courses of action. We need to identify the cognitive processes (Recall and Recognition, Inference, Evaluation) that are at work. Next, we need to pinpoint current participant subskills such as fractions, decimals, synonyms, and homonyms. Following these two steps we must:

- Implement a curriculum that prioritizes the cognitive processes and subskills that characterize the participant's current skill level.
- Take into account the participant's occupational goals.
- Motivate their advancement to a realistic skill level that will gain them entry into the 90s labor market.
- Build linkages between the Labor Market Analyst in the Labor Department's district offices and Work Skills Program operators.
- Provide information regarding occupational growth and the characteristics of the occupations in their geographical area.

In summary, a youth program, such as Work Skills, that has a curriculum focusing on the cognitive processes and subskills outlining participant's occupational choices, and which reflects the reality of the local labor market is indeed an important first step in preparing "at risk" youth for the 90s labor market.

Appendix:
Curriculum Innovation

1990-1991

Youth Work Skills Program Sites

ACTION FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY, INC.
244 South Plymouth Avenue
Rochester, New York 14607
(716) 325-5116

BEDFORD STUYVESANT YMCA
1121 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11216
(718) 622-9100

BROWNSVILLE COMMUNITY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION CENTER, INC.
1574 Pitkin Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11212
(718) 385-4620

CLARKSON CENTER FOR YOUTH
111 Elmwood Avenue.
Buffalo, New York 14202
(716) 882-6075

CORPORATION FOR YOUTH ENERGY CORPS, INC.
760 East 160th Street
Bronx, New York 10456
(212) 402-3300

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN
249 Manhattan Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11211
(718) 388-6666

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CENTER, INC.
1600 Fillmore Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14211
(716) 881-0793

SCHENECTADY JOB TRAINING AGENCY
609 State Street
Schenectady, New York 12305
(518) 382-5894

SOUTHEAST BRONX NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, INC.
955 Tinton Avenue
Bronx, New York 10456
(212) 542-2727

URBAN LEAGUE OF ROCHESTER
177 North Clinton Avenue
Rochester, New York 14604
(716) 325-6530

UTICA COMMUNITY ACTION, INC.
214 Rutger Street
Utica, New York 13501
(315) 797-5326

YOUTH RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
P.O. Box 4737
Poughkeepsie, New York 12602
(914) 473-5005

CURRICULUM INNOVATION
APPENDIX A

PROGRAM:
National Congress of
Neighborhood Women (NCNW)
249 Manhattan Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11211

FUNDING LEVEL: $82,000

PARENTING SKILLS TRAINING

National Congress of Neighborhood Women's (NCNW) uniqueness is to be found in its Parenting Skills Training Program. Young male and female parents, many of whom are single parents, are exposed to guest speakers and workshops that focus on early childhood development issues such as teething, mothering skills, cognitive development, and common early childhood illnesses.

PHYSICAL FITNESS PROGRAM

NCNW, offers aerobics classes for its participants. One of the job developers lead participants in aerobics three times a week.

PROGRAM:
Action for a Better Community, Inc. (ABC)
244 South Plymouth Avenue
Rochester, New York 14607
(716) 325-5116

FUNDING LEVEL: $160,000

CRIME PREVENTION

In addition to the three recommended phases, a fourth was added which may be labeled I-A: "Changing Directions" --- a dynamic video program created specifically for troubled teenagers in group homes, juvenile justice systems, and students with behavioral problems at school. It consists of 13 video segments in a 3-day workshop. It uses a behavioral modification model ... to explore self-esteem, expectations, attitudes, and beliefs" (quoted from the original application of ABC to the Department of Labor).

MENTORING

A second ABC innovation was to arrange a "Mentor Program" with Rochester's business-supported Center for Educational Development. The

Center recruits appropriate mentors for a minimum, once-weekly meeting with designated Work Skills students. "In addition to providing tutoring, career advising, and ... other forms of assistance regarding jobs or higher education, mentors join students in cultural and social activities." Some mentors become good friends with the participants as well as role models and guiding influences. The Mentor Program coincides with Phase II of ABC's agenda. ABC's basic education phase also includes a computer literacy program.

PROGRAM:
Southeast Bronx Neighborhood
Centers, Inc.
955 Tinton Avenue
Bronx, New York 10456

FUNDING LEVEL: $200,000

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

A full-time counselor sets up regular appointments for enrollees, some as many as 3 or 4 times per week and some less than one per week. School as well as home problems or progress are discussed. The Counselor plans a Family Day to bring parents and staff together and to discuss each student's characteristics, interests, progress, etc. Staff hold regular get-togethers under leadership of the program's director to discuss whether counseling, teaching, job orientation, readiness, or personal problems have been observed or exist with particular students. The Counselor's prior experience as a drama coach demonstrated the personal and therapeutic value of role playing in an individual's development. Role playing has now become a part of the counseling approach to teach self and mutual respect, proper deportment, etc.

For young people, unable to read, the world can be a hostile place. Limited basic skills is a predictor to a number of other personal development barriers to employment that these participants may have. The feelings of inadequacy, impotence and rage are heightened in all levels of interaction in the absence of basic communication skills. To address the number of youth with personal development problems, this program has engaged a psychologist who conducts individual and group counseling sessions.

SEX EDUCATION AND DRUG SEMINARS

During the first ten weeks of program participation, participants attend weekly sex education and drug seminars. Participants identified as high risk receive intense counseling during this period.

CURRICULUM INNOVATION

As an adjunct to the basic education phase of the program, participants are exposed to a word processing and typing program.

PROGRAM: **FUNDING LEVEL:** $225,000
Allentown Clarkson Community Center, Inc.
111 Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14202

LIFE SKILLS

The Basic Life Skills component of Allentown's approach centers around the practical aspects of daily living and includes topics such as Budgeting, Nutrition, Personal Banking, Housing, Using the Telephone.

SPEAKERS PROGRAM

As an adjunct to Basic Life Skills component Allentown has an extensive speakers program. Guest speaker topics range from family planning, to sexually transmitted disease to crime prevention.

CURRICULUM INNOVATION

Allentown has developed an intensive GED preparation program. Like the Urban League, Allentown has identified three levels of participants with regard to reading. Participants are positioned into three groups - those that read at the 2.4 to 3.9 level, those who read at the 4.0 to 4.8 level and those who read at the 4.9 to 5.9 level.

PROGRAM: **FUNDING LEVEL:** $85,000
Corporation for Youth Energy Corps, Inc.
760 East 160th Street
Bronx, New York 10456
(212) 402-3300

JOB DEVELOPMENT/SELF RELIANCE

Youth Energy Corps follows the recommended program phases. Program innovation is reflected in activities which center around turning the participant into a job developer. In the words of the Project Director, "Placement is self directed...self reliance is the way to go...the idea is to free them (participants) up from depending on

programs like this." According to the Director cognitive skills are reinforced on the work site by having the participant submit his/her job likes/dislikes in writing to program staff.

HOUSING

In addition to the aforementioned activities, Youth Energy Corps, Inc. focuses on assisting the participant in obtaining adequate housing which may mean moving or rehabing their present abode.

PROGRAM:
Urban League of Rochester
177 North Clinton Avenue
Rochester, New York 14604
(716) 325-6530

FUNDING LEVEL: $165,000

PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT

For the most part the Urban League follows the recommended program phases. Notwithstanding, the Urban League's uniqueness is reflected in their assessment procedure. During the assessment phase of the program the Urban League identifies three levels of participants with regard to reading levels. Participants who initially test at the first through third grade reading level are placed in a primary group. Those participants who test at the fourth through fifth grade level are placed in an intermediate group. Participants who test at the five point nine reading level are placed in the secondary group. This last group undergoes GED preparation while the other groups are exposed to an intense basic education remediation program.

PROGRAM:
Community Service Council of
Greater Harlem, Inc. (CSC)
207 West 133rd Street
New York, New York 10030
(212) 926-0281

FUNDING LEVEL: $139,000

The strength of CSC program is to be found in its ability to prepare Work Skills participants to take advantage of other CSC funded program. Upon completion of the basic education component of phase one, participants are exposed to a word processing, typing and computer literacy program. It's also worth noting that CSC has set a goal of an eighth grade reading level for its participants. Math and reading instruction is geared towards the participant's occupational interest.

PHASE TWO

During phase two, participants work in either banking, the clerical field or construction.

According to the Project Coordinator abut 35% of the program participants are placed with banks. Another 35% work in construction. Thirty percent are placed in a clerical job.

GED

Like many other program operators CSC focuses on preparing participants to take the GED examination. Preparation includes the administration of a pre GED test to determine glaring areas of weakness. This activity enables the instructor to construct an individualized participant instructional plan based on participant test results.

PROGRAM:
Utica Community Action, Inc. (UCA)
214 Rutger Street
Utica, New York 13501
(315) 797-6473

FUNDING LEVEL: $82,000

COMPUTER LEARNING LAB

The Youth Work Skills Program, administered by Utica Community Action, Inc. (UCA) has incorporated several unique aspects of learning into the generic (basic) Work Skills design.

For example, part of UCA's remediation program consists of the PALS computer learning lab. Secured by Senator James Donovan the PALS computer learning lab is utilized extensively by Youth Work Skills participants. Through this program, participants have improved reading and writing skills, learned keyboarding, and increased vocabulary and spelling proficiency.

READING REPORT SYSTEM

A reading report system is another unique program aspect initiatived by UCA staff. When a participant enters the program, he/she is assigned a novel to read based on interest and reading level as determined by the pre-program assessment of reading skills. Each novel is previewed by a staff member. Several questions are printed into the book at the end of each chapter, and a vocabulary list for each chapter is prepared. The participants are given notebooks and instructed to write short answers to the questions, and define each word listed in the

vocabulary. When a participant finishes a book, he tells staff and fellow participants who he thinks would like to read the novel and why. This activity usually encourages the participant who is chosen to read the novel as well. The system works very well especially in reinforcing vocabulary work when there is more than one participant who has worked with the same vocabulary lists. According to the Program Director, "some participants finish a book in a week or less, and keep coming back for more." She also said that many of UCA's participants have never read a novel prior to coming to the program. The novels ranged from teenage romances to adventures, to mystery and to science fiction.

In addition, the Director said that the reading report system works very well with UCS's daily fifteen minute Sustained Select Reading (SSR) program. The SSR program is enforced daily from 11:45-12 p.m. Each participant and staff member read for fifteen minutes each day. There is no limitation on reading matter. Magazines, newspapers, and the aforementioned novels are available to participants and staff.

A final aspect of the academic side of UCA's program is the cooking lessons that participants receive in conjunction with basic living skills. Part of basic living skills includes budgeting and menu planning. In order to make this exercise more meaningful to participants, UCA allowed them to actually purchase ingredients and cook certain food themselves. Next program year UCA plan to have participants do an actual week's shopping after planning menus. In the words of Ms. Daily, "they will actually gather all the necessary ingredients and 'check out' through a special cash register which will tell them exactly how much they have spent of their budget."

PROGRAM:
St. Augustine's Center, Inc.
1600 Fillmore Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14211
(716) 897-4110

FUNDING LEVEL: $100,000

JOB READINESS TRAINING

St. Augustine's staff facilitate participant's exploration of issues related to how to choose, find, get and keep a job. Aspects of Adkin Life Skill program are employed, resume preparation, filling out applications, mock job interviews and role play of job problems, are integrated into the workshops.

In addition to the aforementioned program activities, St. Augustine's puts out a weekly newsletter which highlights violence in the community. Issues of the newsletter focus on criminal activity such as shoplifting, vandalism and drug sales, and the subsequent arrest of the perpetrators. According to staff, headlines such as, "Drug Dealer Shot" impact participants' lives, hopefully for the better.

PROGRAM:
Youth Resources Development Corp. (YRDC)
P.O. Box 4737
Poughkeepsie, New York
(914) 473-5005

FUNDING LEVEL: $161,000

CAREER INVESTMENT PLAN

Upon entering YRDC's program, the agency assesses a young person's basic skills. Participants and staff jointly develop a Career Investment Plan (CIP). The CIP is the basic document that participants and staff use to determine progress in attaining the goals they establish with respect to basic skills and employment readiness. The first two sections document the participant's need for services and employment goals. For the duration of the program, participants record their accomplishments using four more sections of the CIP document.

YRDC staff developed the CIP during the pilot phase to document and record progress of program participants. CIP also identifies employment barriers and limitations, and incorporated plans for overcoming those barriers. The final section of the document provides for follow-up.

All participants attend basic education classes. The curriculum, which YRDC has designed to increase job readiness, includes both basic education and pre-employment skill development. YRDC conducts basic skills instruction in a highly individualized manner. Because of the low level of basic skills at entrance into the program, the majority of YRDC participants are not GED candidates. Rather, the program's goals for participants include attaining functional literacy.

CAREER PASSPORT

Work and classroom constitute the basis for establishing benchmarks which evaluate participant's progress towards employability: dependability; positive work attitudes and habits; dealing effectively with supervisors; effectively operating equipment, tools, and machines; developing effective working relationships; and determining appropriate dress and readiness for work, as well as job-specific skills. This evaluation continues throughout the internship and try-out employment programs.

Using the Career Passport, a document that the National Institute for Work and Learning developed, YRDC participants also construct a comprehensive resume. The Passport contains nine sections and comes in workbook format. These resumes help present the participants as employable people--and thus help meet a major goal of YRDC, to turn out young people ready to take and hold jobs.

PROGRAM:
Brownsville Community Neighborhood
Center
1574 Pitkin Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11212
(718) 221-0010

FUNDING LEVEL: $181,000

APPROACH TO READING

In the first phase of the program each participant, with staff assistance, obtained a library card and learned how to use library services. Each participant was encouraged to choose four books of interest to read and write reports of their opinions regarding the book.

All participants were taught the critical elements of public speaking based on a significant participant need of better communication skills. Each participant was assigned to attend and to make a verbal presentation at such sites as the Local School Board, Planning Boards, Area Policy Board, New York State Senate and Assembly Public hearings on youth issues.

During subsequent phases of the program participants were also assigned to unite and perform their own plays. The topics of these plays covered a wide variety of topics and gave participants an opportunity to express feelings and ideas before an audience of their peers, staff and family members.

Each of these activities not only cause participants to practice various skills, but is also provided an opportunity to accomplish something and have that accomplishment shared by others. Personal self esteem was seen to be enhanced by these activities.